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NCRTD CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY

The North Central Regional Transit District today celebrated the 10th Anniversary of its certification as the first regional transit district (RTD) in the State of New Mexico with a gathering at the Jim West Regional Transit District, its headquarters in Española, New Mexico.

In 2004, the North Central Regional Transit District (NCRTD) became the first Regional Transit District created in the State of New Mexico following the passing of the New Mexico Regional Transit District Act, in 2003, which enabled the formation of multi-jurisdictional transit agencies. The legislation was put forth and enacted to provide safe and efficient regional transit services to transit-dependent groups such as seniors, youth, low income and mobility-impaired residents, veterans, and further to provide residents with access to education, higher paying jobs, medical and quality-of-life services.

The District is comprised of four counties of North Central New Mexico – Rio Arriba, Santa Fe, Taos and Los Alamos. The membership of the NCRTD Board is comprised of elected officials of each of those counties as well as the City of Santa Fe, Town of Edgewood and City of Española; as well as the Pueblos of Pojoaque, Nambé, San Ildefonso, Tesuque, Santa Clara and Ohkay Owingeh.

According to NCRTD Chair, Taos County Commissioner and Town of Taos Mayor, Daniel Barrone, “prior to the formation of the NCRTD, the region was populated with transit islands and no means of getting off the island: The Chile Line in Taos, Santa Fe Trails in Santa Fe, Atomic City Transit in Los Alamos and the City of Espanola Transit System. Today, as a result of the NCRTD which began service in 2007, the entire region is interconnected with a system of transit routes on which one could travel from Chama or Costilla on the Colorado State Line south to Santa Fe or on to Edgewood in southern Santa Fe County -- a distance of 175 miles. Connections to the New Mexico Rail Runner Express further provide the region with access to Albuquerque and beyond.”

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In fiscal year 2014, the NCRTD was able to provide a record number of rides to the members of the District with 498,096 trips on NCRTD-operated routes and those funded by the NCRTD and operated by Santa Fe Trails and Atomic City Transit.

In Fiscal Year 2015, the District will begin to implement its updated five-year service plan that will allow for expanded and more efficiently-timed routes. Simultaneously, an Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) will be introduced which will allow for real-time bus location services, a smartphone app, automated trip planning and computer-aided dispatch.

The District plays a significant role in reducing the region's carbon footprint and last year removed 2,291 tons of carbon emissions from the air we breathe and took 4.72 million vehicle miles off state roads and highways.

The New Mexico Department of Transportation provided a start-up grant of $250,000 in 2005. By 2007, the NCRTD began service with three buses operating on five routes. Today, more than 50 communities are served by a total of 43 buses on 20 fixed and commuter routes and two Demand Response routes. Known widely and affectionately as the "Blue Bus," in fiscal year 2014 RTD buses logged a total of 922,835 miles (an average of 46,142 miles per route).

The NCRTD provides free service Monday through Friday. In addition to Federal grants and 5311 funding, a Regional Transit Gross Receipts Tax was passed in 2008 by general election in each of the counties and goes to support the free service.

From the Gross Receipts Taxes (GRT) it collects each year, the NCRTD contributes to regional transportation services provided by other transit operators in its four-county north central New Mexico area. In FY2014, $940,921 went to support Santa Fe Trails, $1.34 million was provided to support Los Alamos Atomic City Transit and $2.1 million (projected) went to New Mexico Rail Runner Express.

"Few had envisioned that we would come this far in such a short amount of time and this marks a milestone that strongly positions us for the future and the future benefit of the communities we serve," Barrone concluded.

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